

Regular Meeting
Monday, April 16, 2012
9:00 am
Chowan County Public Safety Center
305 West Freemason Street

MINUTES

The Chowan County Board of Commissioners held a joint meeting with the Edenton-Chowan Board of Education on Monday, April 16, 2012 at 9:00 am in the Chowan County Public Safety Center, 305 West Freemason Street Edenton NC. Present: Chairman Eddy Goodwin, Commissioners Keith Nixon, Jeff Smith, Emmett Winborne, Ralph Cole and John Mitchener. Staff Present: County Manager Zee Lamb, Finance Officer Kim Woodley and Board Clerk Susanne Stallings.

Commissioner Lawrence was absent.

Edenton Chowan School Board members present were Ricky Browder, Gil Burroughs, Win Dale, Jean Bunch, Kay Wright, Gene Jordan and John Guard. Superintendent Alan Smith was also present.

Chairman Goodwin called the meeting to order.

Dr. Alan Smith thanked the Board of Commissioners for meeting jointly with the School Board. He provided the Board with a copy of the FY 2012-13 budget request from the schools. He noted that the Board of Education is expecting a reduction of federal and state monies in the coming fiscal year, including federal stimulus monies. He stated that the Board anticipates a reduction in the state planning allotment totaling \$341,578.

Commissioner Cole asked if the state has discussed taking any lottery monies in the upcoming year.

Dr. Smith said no. He stated that the largest reduction is in the discretionary reduction line. He stated that Edenton-Chowan Schools has been proactive in the past few years with reductions of supplies, field trips, and personnel. He stated salaries have been reduced and of the 48 positions eliminated 20 were licensed and 28 were classified.

Commissioner Winborne asked approximately how many positions were eliminated through retirement and reassignments.

Dr. Smith stated approximately one half of those positions. He stated that some positions were able to be restored and he would forward that information to the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Winborne asked if there were any reductions in Administration.

Dr. Smith said that one administrator was reduced, two system wide administrators totaling 4 positions. Dr. Smith added that the Board of Education plans to appropriate fund balance. He stated the Board has some concern as this will be the first year fund balance was appropriated to cover reoccurring expenses.

Commissioner Cole asked if the State will require any salary increases.

Dr. Smith stated he was not sure of that at that time.

Mr. Browder stated that he felt the Board of Education was doing well as many school systems do not have any fund balance available.

Dr. Smith added his concern for the potential to increase classroom sizes.

Mr. Lamb asked what the fund balance will be at the end of the current fiscal year.

Dr. Smith stated that \$1.2 million is unobligated.

Commissioner Nixon asked how much of the appropriated fund balance will be spent.

Dr. Smith stated that he estimates \$550,000 to be spent in the current fiscal year.

Commissioner Smith asked for information on capital reserve monies.

Dr. Smith stated there are monies not accessed in the current year for Land Transfer.

Commissioner Winborne asked if the school board is recommended to have a fund balance.

Dr. Smith stated that schools receive monies from different sources and each board of education has its own philosophy.

Chairman Goodwin stated that statewide he has heard about several Boards struggling because they had no fund balances and that he feels that Chowan County has done well in comparison.

Mr. Lamb stated that this budget indicates a reduction in \$540,000 in federal monies and \$340,000 in state funds an amount that is almost impossible for the county to make up.

Commissioner Nixon asked if the state is releasing the counties of any mandates with the reduction of funds.

Dr. Smith stated the federal monies do have strings with the exception of the stimulus monies. He stated these monies were used for salaries.

Commissioner Mitchener asked if these monies were to be spent within a certain amount of time.

Dr. Smith stated any monies not spent within the two years have to be returned.

Chairman Goodwin stated that many fund balances have been impacted by the elimination of stimulus monies.

Mr. Browder stated that many boards spent their fund balances hoping for a fiscal turn-around. He stated that still having a fund balance shows good fiscal responsibility on the part of the school system.

Dr. Smith noted again that his concern was that the school was designating fund balance for the first time to cover reoccurring costs.

Mr. Guard mentioned his concern with the State's discretionary reduction.

Commissioner Winborne stated that the federal and state cuts are difficult for the county to make up. He stated his appreciation for the school's hard work and stated he hoped the school and the county could continue to work together. He noted that if taxes were raised to cover the difference in loss of revenue it would be unfortunate to place that reoccurring expense on the taxpayers.

Commissioner Mitchener stated he felt some reoccurring expenses are reoccurring benefits.

Dr. Smith discussed the plan for an alternative school in Priority 1, noting there are 20-25 students in alternative programs. He stated this program will accelerate the credits earned by students.

Commissioner Nixon stated that privatizing the alternative program may be a better alternative in his opinion. However he was aware that the Commissioners cannot designate the current expense monies. He added that if the county wanted to reinstate the supplemental pay for the teachers that could also not be designated by the county.

Dr. Smith stated that was correct.

The Board discussed the capital outlay requests/projects.

Commissioner Nixon stated his priority for capital projects would be to get rid of the huts at the highschool. He stated he felt the classrooms are a priority.

Commissioner Winborne stated that the county appropriated \$3.1 million to the school in the current fiscal year; this budget requests an increase of \$500,000.

Commissioner Nixon noted that some of the monies in the \$500,000 were placed in reserve and will be reduced in the following year budget.

Mr. Lamb inquired about the Capital monies and asked if it were possible to use lottery monies for any of the projects.

Commissioner Nixon stated he would want to know how much lottery money was used for the projects.

Chairman Goodwin thanked the Board of Education for the open dialogue. The Board of Education members left the meeting.

The Board then took a 10 minute recess. After the recess, Chairman Goodwin called the meeting to order.

Public Comment

Chairman Goodwin then opened the floor to public comment in accordance with NCGS 153A-52.1.

COA Edenton Campus Dean, Lynn Hurdle Winslow provided the Board with an invitation to the open house at COA Edenton Campus.

There was no further public comment.

Consent Agenda

Chairman Goodwin then presented the consent agenda.

Recommended Budget Amendment

BA-1112-066

3418	Reg of Deeds	\$ 9,360	Increase revenue from conveyance tax collections
4180	Reg of Deeds	\$ 7,500	Increase conveyance tax expenditures and IT supplies (Land Records) to purchase new printer
		<u>1,860</u>	
		\$ 9,360	

Surplus Property

Board Clerk Susanne Stallings provided the Board with photos of four (4) generator trailers, one (1) covered trailer, and one (1) trailer. She stated that the Sheriff requests that these items be declared surplus and listed for sale on Gov Deals. These items were stored on the property on Soundside Rd. are beyond their useful life. She added that this is part of the cleanup of the Soundside Road property as requested by the Board.

Being no further discussion Commissioner Smith moved that the Board approve the consent agenda as presented. Chairman Goodwin asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Resolution Over-width Farm Equipment to be safely driven on Controlled Access

Highways

Commissioner Smith presented a resolution for Board consideration that encourages the NC General Assembly to allow over-width farm equipment to be safely driven on fully controlled access highways.

Commissioner Cole moved that the Board adopt the resolution as presented. Chairman Goodwin asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Resolution

Supporting the General Assembly changing the General Statutes to allow over-width farm equipment to be safely driven on controlled access highways

Whereas, in 2008, the General Assembly of North Carolina passed Senate Bill 1965(Session Law 2008-211) and;

Whereas, this bill increased the allowable width of farm equipment on North Carolina roads from 18 to 25 feet, and;

Whereas, along with the width increase, an additional restriction was enacted that prohibited this farm equipment from fully controlled access highways, and;

Whereas, this additional restriction placed an unforeseen hardship on farmers who need to move equipment from one farm to another, and;

Whereas, farmers are running out of viable options to move equipment, and;

Whereas, this restriction would will lead to increased over width traffic on US 17 Business traffic through the Town of Edenton, and;

Whereas, restricted use of the Hwy 17 bridge for oversized farm equipment eliminates the only viable option for crossing the Chowan River, and;

Whereas, Highway 17 will allow such equipment to be safely moved through our county in the safest manner possible without increased safety concerns to county citizens, and;

Whereas, farm organizations in the state are working with the N. C. Department of Agriculture to develop language that would allow farmers to drive their equipment on controlled access highways in the safest manner possible, and;

Now, therefore be it resolved, that the Chowan County Board of Commissioners hereby encourages our North Carolina General Assembly to allow over width farm equipment to be safely driven on fully controlled access highways.

Approved this 16th day of April, 2012.

JCPC Funding Plan

DSS Director Clifton Hardison presented the Executive Summary and the Funding Plan for Board consideration. A copy of the plan is in the meeting file labeled April 16, 2012.

Commissioner Mitchener moved that the board approve the plan as presented. Chairman Goodwin asked for all in favor, the motion passed (4-2 Winborne, Nixon).

Board Appointment

The Board reviewed a request from the Northeastern Workforce Development Board to reappoint John Bassett to a second term on their Board. Commissioner Mitchener moved that the Board approve the appointment. Chairman Goodwin asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Water Department Annual Report

Water Supervisor Nick Lolie provided the annual report on the activities of the Water Department.

Mr. Lamb asked if growth is expected to make impacts on the water system.

Mr. Lolie stated that if Sandy Point Development starts, there will be significant impact on the water system.

Introduction of Maintenance Director

Mr. Lamb introduced the new Maintenance Director Terry Rose. He stated that he is already receiving good feedback on Mr. Rose from COA and various department heads. Mr. Rose stated he was looking forward to working for the County.

Introduction of Recreation Director

Mr. Lamb introduced Jason Petersen the County's new Recreation Director. Mr. Petersen stated he was excited about all the resources available for recreation in Chowan County.

Beaver Management Assistance Program

Mr. Lamb presented a request for the Board to consider participation in the Beaver Management Assistance Program (BMAP) for the next fiscal year. He noted that Chowan County has not participated in this program since 2008.

The Board recommended that this be placed on hold until budget numbers are available for consideration.

Finance Officer Report

Finance Officer Kim Woodley presented the Finance Report with information on sales tax distribution, revenue and expenses.

Commissioner Nixon expressed his concern with the temperatures and utility bill at the Public Safety Center.

Ms. Stallings explained the system has been corrected and is being used more due to the increase of bodies in the building.

Commissioner Nixon stated his concern with the shortage of revenues in EMS.

Mr. Lamb stated he is monitoring this with the EMS Director. He stated he has instructed the director to save where he can in order to minimize the deficit.

Chowan County Debt

Ms. Woodley presented information to the Board on Chowan County Debt and possible restructuring of the debt. She stated that the Board of Commissioners would need to schedule a public hearing as well as adopt a resolution of findings on the restructuring of the debt.

Commissioner Mitchener moved that the Board of Commissioners authorize the Finance Officer to inquire of the rates and bring a resolution back to the Board for consideration. Being no further discussion Chairman Goodwin asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

(A copy of the finance reports is in the meeting file labeled April 16, 2012).

Timely and Important Matters

The Board considered a request from Center Hill Crossroads Fire Department to accept a brush truck at no cost to the County. The County will assume ownership of the vehicle and provide insurance on it. Being no further discussion Commissioner Smith moved that the Board accept the Truck from the Forestry Service. Chairman Goodwin asked for all in favor, the motion passed (6-0).

Closed Session

Commissioner Nixon moved that the Board go into Closed Session in accordance with NCGS 143-318.11(a) (5) (i) Negotiating acquisition of real property. Mr. Lories, Water Supervisor was invited to stay in the closed session.

The closed session minutes are sealed.

Commissioner Smith moved that the Board close the Closed Session. Chairman Goodwin asked for all in favor, the motion passed (6-0).

Land Purchase

Commissioner Smith moved that the County purchase property in the amount of \$75,000 from Mr. James and Constance Copeland, located beside the Valhalla Water Treatment Plant and authorized the Chairman to sign the offer to purchase the property.

He noted this property would be used for future expansion of the water treatment plant. Chairman Goodwin asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Adjourn

Being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned

Chairman
Edward C. Goodwin

Clerk